

There are a number of techniques teachers can use to try to build more personal connections between their students and their fieldwork locations.

Pre-fieldwork

- Don't just research the place. Also get students to find oral histories of local people and investigate the work of local charities. Looking into a local charity could form a case study to help with other areas of the course (e.g. Edexcel A Level – Diverse Places: how local groups manage change).
- Study the countryside code and write a code for compassionate fieldwork. This could be extended to urban areas – ask students to think about why each of the guidelines are important and the consequences of not following them.
- Get copies of local newspapers and understand what the local issues are. Local letters pages are a treasure trove of opinions about local issues.
- Look at the work of a local photography club. Students have easy access to Instagram so it can be used as secondary data.
- Write a risk assessment for the landscape or for the interviewee. We are used to them following risk assessments that keep themselves safe – could they write a risk assessment to keep the local landscape and people safe too?
- Record preconceptions and outsider perspectives. It can be really insightful and useful for students to reflect on how they initially viewed a place, how those viewpoints have changed, and most importantly why those opinions changed.
- Emphasise the 'powerful knowledge' underpinning the issues. Students will best engage with issues and processes they see in the field if they have the core knowledge already laid down in their minds. Compassion is then far easier to achieve when students have to then apply that knowledge to their fieldwork location.

During fieldwork

- Make greater use of interviews as well as questionnaires. Students tend to shy away from interviews as the data can be more difficult to deal with. Even if it is not formally recorded, an interview or a few less formal questions at the end of a questionnaire can give students so much more information and insight about an issue.
- Have sensory time. This is especially good with younger key stages - students can lie on their back, close their eyes or be led while blindfolded and just take in the sounds, smells and touch of the things they come across.
- "Find a view that makes you feel..." This works well with students of all key stages but more complex descriptors can be used with older students.
- Finding evidence of an alternative view. Students should recognise that they are likely to go to a fieldwork site with an outsiders perception of it already in place in their minds. An interesting exercise is to try to find the exact opposite of what they were expecting in the landscape or in the opinions of local people. It is like a conflicting treasure hunt.
- Place the quote bubble. This is really fun to do as a starter activity in the field. Each student is given a pre-printed speech bubble card with quotes such as 'I'm sad' or 'ignore me' and told to place it or hold it within view of a central point where the teacher or tutor stands. They then justify why they chose that point. This can also work well with emojis.
- Mood mapping. This is often done as a form of data collection/presentation but can also be used to chart how students feel about a fieldwork location (especially urban spaces) before and after a piece of fieldwork has been carried out. Students could swap maps in the interim and see how others feel about a space which can be a good source of discussion in the 'post-lunch lull'.
- Slow down and just observe. Sometimes the simplest methods are the best. Students can take themselves off individually (within sight) to just sit and watch and listen for five minutes. It is amazing just how much students get out of this simple activity and how much they take in.

Post-fieldwork

- Write a diary entry of someone or something at the field site. This might be an interesting person that they have interviewed, or a piece of bedload, or a seagull etc. This helps put the students in the mindset of someone or something that calls the field site home.
- Create a 'Mayor for a day' DME. A decision making exercise can be made as complex or as simple as you like but pose to students that if they were the Mayor / National Park Ranger / Local Councillor etc what would they do to make a difference to the field site?
- Write a school report. Students might like to write an end of term school report for the field site – what is going well and what needs to happen to improve (as well as awarding the fieldsite a grade).
- Create a description/evaluation pyramid. Students write a description or evaluation of the field site in at least 400 words. They then have to edit this so it reads at 300 words, followed by 200, then 100 then 50. The idea is that students are forced to concentrate increasingly on the most pertinent descriptions or the most important issues to include.
- Write a thank you letter to someone significant. This is a nice thing to do regardless of the intention. It can be addressed to a local councillor, MP, land owner, or charitable body. Within the letter students can say what they liked about the place but also raise an issue they feel is locally important.
- Create a photo SWOT analysis. Students should be taking lots of photos of the field site throughout their time there. On returning to the classroom it might be nice to set up a collaborative project where students print and place a photo in one of four quadrants on a display board that they feel best represents its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Keep discussing the field site and use it as an example in other contexts. The field site can be used extensively as an example or case study as well as a source of data for an investigation. This helps to keep it in the front of their minds: “do you remember when we saw xxxx at xxxxx?”